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TAGS: [PTER](#) [PREL](#) [KU](#)

SUBJECT: KUWAITI CABINET CONDEMNS SHI'A RALLY FOR MUGNIYAH

REF: A. KUWAIT 0175

[1](#)B. KUWAIT 0126

Classified By: CDA Misenheimer for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

[1](#)1. (C) Summary: On February 17, hundreds of Kuwaiti Shi'a reportedly attended a rally to mourn the death of Hezbollah terrorist leader Imad Mugniyah. Kuwait's media are having a field day denouncing the event, and two (Shi'a) MPs who attended are targets of a massive outpouring of public hostility. Kuwait's Cabinet was quick to condemn the rally and accused its Shi'a organizers of inciting sectarian tension. Hamas strongly criticized the GOK position on Mugniyah and now reportedly considers Kuwait its "enemy," despite recent GOK financial and humanitarian assistance to Gaza. The rally and its aftermath have highlighted the line between Sunni and Shi'a in Kuwait like no issue in recent memory. End summary.

[1](#)2. (U) Hundreds of Kuwaiti Shi'a reportedly attended a rally to mourn the death of Hezbollah terrorist leader Imad Mugniyah on February 17. Shi'a MP Adnan Abdulsamad, also in attendance, claimed there was no evidence to link Mugniyah to the 1988 hijacking of a Kuwait Airlines flight, which resulted in the death of two Kuwaiti citizens (ref A). Abdulsamad reportedly called Mugniyah a "martyr who shook the ground beneath the Zionist enemy and America."

[1](#)3. (U) In response, Kuwait's Cabinet condemned the rally and accused its Shi'a organizers of inciting sectarian tension. Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs Faisal Al-Hajji called the rally a "provocative action" and cautioned that "we should spare our society the sufferings being felt by other societies" (i.e. Iraq). Liberal and conservative Sunni MPs united in calling for Abdulsamad to be stripped of both his Parliamentary seat and his Kuwaiti citizenship. In addition, several Kuwaiti lawyers filed a complaint against Abdulsamad and Ahmad Larri (another Shi'a MP who attended the rally) for supporting terrorism and insulting the Kuwaiti people.

[1](#)4. (U) Kuwaiti media are having a field day with this issue. On February 19, the Arabic daily newspaper Al-Seyassah reported that Hamas blasted Kuwait's Amir, its shaykhs and its people for their "foolishness in expressing happiness for the assassination of the Muslim Arab leader Mugniyah." The Hamas statement reportedly went on to say that this was to be expected from a people who rejoiced at the execution of the "pearl of the Arabs, Saddam Hussein." According to the report, Hamas now considers Kuwait its "enemy."

[1](#)5. (C) Comment: The Mugniyah rally demonstrates the sympathy some portions of Kuwait's Shi'a community have for Hezbollah, especially in the aftermath of the 2006 Israel-Hezbollah war. Hamas' comments, on the other hand, are particularly

striking in light of Kuwait's recent efforts to provide emergency financial assistance and humanitarian aid to Gaza Palestinians (ref B). No issue in memory has so highlighted the distinction between Sunni and Shi'a in Kuwait. Shi'a comprise about 30 percent of the Kuwaiti population, and traditionally have enjoyed wealth and close links to the Al Sabah identical to those of the Sunni majority. End comment.

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